

JALT2007

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# Music and listening: Learning gain without pain

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## Reference data

Lieb, M.M. (2008). Music and listening: Learning gain without pain.

In K. Bradford Watts, T. Muller, & M. Swanson (Eds.), *JALT2007 Conference Proceedings*. Tokyo: JALT.

Beginning with its origins as *musicas* in Greek mythology, there is a long and well-documented link between music and language, which has become increasingly evident over time. Clinical studies in the fields of cognitive psychology, musical therapy, and whole brain research offer further evidence of the interconnectivity of music and language. Even the field of SLA is leaning increasingly towards naturalist, communicative approaches, including the "Musico-linguistic approach," suggesting an important role for music in the EFL classroom. Music is known also for alleviating many forms of anxiety and increasing positive associations in general. It appears, therefore, that music has the potential to address important issues in the Japanese EFL context, particularly low motivation, and learner anxiety. Despite this, however, many are resistant to the idea of using music as a pedagogical tool in the EFL classroom, thereby forgoing a promising opportunity to positively influence student achievement. This paper describes a small scale study, which examined the effects of using music with beginner and advanced level university EFL students. The study investigated possible links between music and reduced learner anxiety in listening tasks, as well as increased positive associations towards the learning of English in general. Although results were mixed, the study raises important questions about the use of music as a pedagogical tool, and implies the need for further comprehensive investigation of this topic.

ギリシャ神話の*musicas*の語源をたどり、現在に遡ると、そこには、長い期間に渡って繰り返し検証され、明らかにされてきた、音楽と言語の関係性があることが分かる。認知心理学の臨床研究においても、例えば音楽療法や脳研究が、音楽と言語の相互連関性に関する、より詳細な証拠を提示している。さらに、第二言語習得の領域においても、"Music-linguistic approach"を含む、自然主義の立場や コミュニカティブ・アプローチの側から、EFL教室で果たす音楽の重要な役割に感心が集まっている。一般に音楽は、多様な不安を軽減し、良い影響をもたらすことが知られている。こうした理由から、学習動機が低く、学習者不安の認められる日本のEFL環境においても、音楽を利用した英語教育の有用性を指摘することができるだろう。しかしながら、その有用性が確認されながらも、音楽を教育的な道具としてEFLの教室で利用することは、未だ一般的な方法であるとは言い難い。本研究は、初級と上級の大学生を対象に、音楽の有効性を調査した小規模な事例研究である。本研究では、リスニング・タスク実施時における、学生の学習者不安軽減に果たす音楽の役割と、音楽が学生の英語学習一般に与える影響について調査された。本研究をとおしては、教育的な道具としての音楽の可能性と、より包括的な研究の必要性が示唆された。

It is widely acknowledged that any educational endeavour is most likely to be successful, when it is rooted in the needs and interests of the learner. Such holistic approaches imply that successful teaching and learning must take into consideration the affective and emotional needs of learners as well as the cognitive needs. Recent advances in educational thought have added momentum to the idea that successful learning is student centered rather than teacher centered. The EFL classroom is no exception. Yet, many are resistant to the idea of using “nontraditional” instructional approaches, to the detriment of student success. This paper contends that music, despite being acclaimed as having strong links to language learning, is drastically underutilized as a pedagogical tool. The benefits of using music in language teaching will be examined, in particular as it relates to listening task anxiety and increasing positive associations with learning English in general.

### Music and language

Throughout history, the link between music and language has been well documented. The word *music* comes from the Greek word *musicas*, which is defined as “an intimate union of melody, verse, and dance,” (Dickinson, 1909, in Stansell, 2005). This Greek concept of music was much more inclusive than modern notions of music. The muses were believed to use their *music* to inspire spoken language such as epic, lyric, sacred, and love poetry as well as comedy and tragedy (Bullfinch, 1913, p. 22). Over time, descriptions of the connection between language and music became considerably refined. Del Campo, 1997 (as cited in Mora,

2000, p. 147) describes how the three key components of verbal interaction (words, body language, and intonation) correspond directly with the three classical elements of *musicas* (verse, dance, and melody respectively). He goes on to point out the complexities of verbal interaction in which only 15% of the message comes from verbal language, 70% comes from body language, with the remaining 15% communicated through intonation. It would appear from this that prosodic, musical aspects of language play a key role in communicating meaning, and should be carefully considered in linguistic study.

Studies of language acquisition in early childhood have also underscored the connection between music and language. Mora’s (2000) research has shown that rhythm and musical contours of language are mastered long before speech. She asserts that early acquisition of such musical aspects of language lay the framework for linguistic components such as phonemes and that “...tone, pauses, stress, and timbre are sonorous units into which ... the consonant and vowel sounds of language are later placed” (p.149). Loewy (1995) proposes that the development of language in children be viewed in terms of “Musical Stages of Speech” (p.48). She cites the work of Van Riper (1984) in which communication progresses from crying in babies, to babbling, to eventually using words. “All of these sounds developmentally prepare for the telegraphic speech that follows” (Van Riper, 1984, p. 87). Stansell (2005) concludes that, “Prelinguistically, music serves as the carrier for communicative intent” (p. 6).

The field of brain research offers further evidence for the connection between music and language learning.

Since its isolation by Howard Gardner (2004) as a distinct intelligence, many have suggested that the musical-rhythmic intelligence works in tandem with the verbal-linguistic intelligence. Zatorre, Evans, and Meyer (1992), in particular, suggest that phonological processing and pitch discrimination, two key components of language, are governed by the left and right brains respectively, in a cooperative effort by the musical-rhythmic and verbal-linguistic intelligences. Zatorre et al. (1992) further suggest that people with musical ability have greater ability to learn a foreign language due to their highly developed ability to perceive, process and closely reproduce accent. The link between music and language learning is further borne out by Jourdain's research (1997) which indicates that among multilingual individuals, high musical proficiency is common.

### Music and the prosodic elements of language

Although the link between music and language is well documented, it could be argued that it is in the teaching of listening and speaking where music holds the greatest potential as a pedagogical tool. Speaking ability is highly dependent on the ability to listen effectively and to decipher sounds accurately. Central to both listening and speaking is the ability to internalize and process prosodic elements such as intonation, pitch, rhythm, dynamics, and timbre. These require well-developed auditory discrimination and acuity. According to Mora (2000), "discourse intonation, the ordering of pitched sounds... is the first thing we learn when we are acquiring a language" (p. 149). Yet, intonation is one of the most difficult things to teach in the EFL

classroom. Fellner (2005) refers to Discourse Intonation (DI) as a relatively new approach, including emphasis on such prosodic elements as tone unit, prominence, tone, key, and termination. However, he cautions that while this approach may benefit advanced learners, it may be overwhelming for beginner students. This author suggests that music may play a role in enabling beginner students to subconsciously process such prosodic features of language. Additionally, music may inspire continued intonation practice outside the classroom, as students are likely to seek out music in their free time. Furthermore, music has the potential to be a powerful reinforcer because of the exaggerated prosody contained therein.

Other studies also show considerable evidence that the prosodic elements of music correlate with those of language, and as such, underscore the value of music as a pedagogical tool in the language classroom. Palmer & Kelly (1992) suggest that the 4-beat time signature of many songs correlates well with the "linguistic foundation of binary alternation, or stressed and unstressed syllables" (p. 539). Macarthur & Trojer (1985) maintain that rhythm, pitch, timbre, and dynamics are qualities shared by music and language. They go on to say that use of a blended "musico-linguistic" approach facilitates the development of "auditory memory, intonation, rhythm, pitch, gesture, body movements, and mime" (p. 211). Richards (1993) refers to the use of music to enhance auditory discrimination skills, including "letter sounds, syllabification, and pronunciation of words" (p. 109). Finally, Mora (2000) posits that because music encourages imitation and subvocal rehearsal, it "enhances EFL learner awareness of sounds, rhythms, pauses, and intonations" (p.152).

### Learner anxiety toward listening tasks

Research indicates that high levels of anxiety can be detrimental to effective learning especially in relation to tasks perceived as difficult. The Yerkes-Dodson Law (in Job & Dipamo, 1991) delineates the relationship between anxiety and task difficulty as follows: high anxiety produces better performance on easy tasks but adversely affects performance on difficult tasks. In the Japanese context, Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1991) (in Koba, Ogawa & Wilkinson, 2000) found that in the Japanese EFL context, listening and speaking tasks generate the most anxiety. Therefore, it follows that reducing anxiety can potentially improve performance on listening tasks perceived as difficult by Japanese learners.

To fully comprehend the magnitude of Japanese student's anxiety towards listening tasks, it is important to remember that while many of them have extensive experience in reading and writing, they lack experience in listening to native speakers throughout their junior high and high school years (Shimo, 2002, Fellner, 2005, Koba et al., 2000). Shimo (2002) examined Japanese learner beliefs about English listening comprehension tasks and found that some Japanese students perceived listening tasks as difficult partly because of the interference of katakana pronunciation. This heightens the need for exposure to native spoken English to increase auditory perception and discrimination. She also found that some students believe that it is not possible to become effective listeners in Japan partly due to the lack of suitable materials. Compounding the problem is the focus on entrance exams as a short-term goal, and the reluctance of Japanese students to be different from others by attempting

to use native-like pronunciation. Furthermore, the hesitancy of Japanese students to make mistakes and their strong desire to understand 100% of the message (Caspino, 2005) can add considerably to the frustration factor in the EFL classroom.

### Music as a pedagogical tool

It follows that there is a need for listening tasks that lower student anxiety and increase student confidence. Shimo (2002) recommends incorporating a greater variety of listening tasks into EFL classrooms that will “help learners to develop positive attitudes towards learning listening skills” (p. 4). She also stresses that approaches to teaching listening “include consideration of learners’ feelings and attitudes so that they are positively engaged in learning activities with less anxiety” (p. 4). Music is widely acknowledged for its therapeutic properties and its power to “assuage and soothe” (Bancroft, 1985, p. 4). Richards (1993) recognizes the value of music “to create a relaxed, stress-free learning atmosphere” (p. 109) while Lieb (2005) draws attention to the potential of music to evoke positive emotions, thereby lowering the affective filter in EFL classrooms.

Another concern is that many of the listening materials currently available are not relevant to students’ lives or interests, and that students feel distant from the tasks (Lamie, 1998). Most would agree that, almost universally, Japanese university students are interested in music. This is borne out by the fact that Japan is the largest importer of English language music in the world (Cullen, 2000). Therefore, there is no shortage of music, especially popular music, in Japan, and there should be no difficulty in tapping

into this resource. Murphey (1992) points out that popular music, because of its vague referents and lack of specificity, allows students to attach their own inner meanings as they listen. This, in itself, dramatically increases the relevance of the listening task and ensures greater engagement on the part of learners. Furthermore, music invites students to become comfortable with understanding the “essence” of the meaning rather than grappling with the insurmountable goal of 100% comprehension (Lieb, 2005, Murphey, 1992). Additionally, music has the power to encourage “out of class associations that are crucial to language learning” (Stansell, 2005). Yet, despite evidence to the contrary, music remains drastically underutilized as a pedagogical tool in the EFL classroom, thereby leading to a plethora of missed opportunities to increase student confidence, interest, and success.

### The small-scale study

Based on the potential of music to enhance pedagogy in the EFL classroom, a small-scale study was undertaken which addressed the following research questions:

1. Can the use of music increase positive attitudes towards learning English?
2. Can music decrease learner anxiety towards English listening comprehension activities?
3. Is there a link between musical ability and level of English?

### Participants

Participants in the study were two groups of 10 students each – a beginner Communicative English class (with TOEIC scores of less than 250); and an advanced Communicative English class (with TOEIC scores over 500). Although there were more than 10 students in each of the classes, only students who completed both of the questionnaires and were present for the musical activities were included in the results of this study. Most of the advanced students listed communication with foreigners and/or future jobs as their reasons for learning English, while most of the beginner students were less specific in their reasons for learning English (see Appendix B). Six students in both classes reported the ability to play a musical instrument, and most students in both classes reported enjoyment of karaoke. However, five of the advanced students and six of the beginner students ranked their own singing ability as poor. All students expressed musical preferences in terms of genres and artists and most expressed enjoyment of both English and Japanese songs.

### Methodology

Students in both classes were asked to complete a questionnaire at the beginning and again at the end of the semester (see Appendix A). The first questionnaire consisted of a short answer section and a Likert rating scale. The purpose of the short answer section was to collect background information on students’ hobbies, interests, reasons for learning English, and feelings about music and listening. The purpose of the rating scale was to collect quantifiable data regarding students’ associations with

English in general, listening activities, and musical ability. The questionnaire was completed again by students at the end of the semester, but only included the rating scale and three of the short answer questions that addressed variables that could have changed during the treatment period.

Between the first and second questionnaires, students in both classes were given the opportunity to complete musical listening activities once a week. These activities included gap fills, musical bingo, short/long vowel discrimination, sequencing lyric strips, and true/false listening comprehension activities. A complete list of songs and activities used is included in Appendix C. As the study progressed, songs were chosen that were simpler and more manageable for the beginner students.

### Results

The results of the rating scale questionnaire are summarized in Table 1. In relation to research question one (Can the use of music increase positive attitudes towards learning English?), there was a noticeable increase in students' ratings of English as enjoyable. The beginners' level of agreement with the statement, "Learning English is enjoyable," increased from 4.5 to 5.0, while the advanced students' level of agreement increased from 5.2 to 5.6. Similarly, the beginners' disagreement with the statement "Learning English is boring" went from 2.2 to 2.0, indicating stronger disagreement. Interestingly, however, the advanced students' disagreement with the same statement became slightly less strong, going from (1.4-1.7). Both still indicate a more positive attitude towards learning English that could possibly be attributed to the use of music in classroom activities.

In the short answer section (see Table 2), the number of beginner students who indicated that they enjoyed learning English increased from seven on the first questionnaire to 10 on the second. The advanced students all answered the same question positively on both questionnaires.

In relation to research question 2, (Can music decrease learner anxiety towards English listening comprehension activities?) results are mixed. On the rating scale, the beginner students' response to the statement "English listening activities are difficult." went from 4.8 to 4.3 indicating slightly less agreement. Similarly, there was a slight increase in their agreement that it is easy to listen to English conversation (2.5-2.6). However, on the short answer section (see Table 3), eight of the beginner students claimed that English listening activities were difficult, as opposed to four on the first questionnaire. Most of the advanced students also rated English listening activities as difficult on the rating scale. However, their rating of the statement "It is easy to listen to English conversation" went from 2.8 to 3.3 indicating more agreement. On the short answer section, however, they appeared to have a more positive view of listening comprehension activities, using terms like "helpful" and "fun" rather than "difficult."

This small-scale study did not uncover a strong connection between musical ability and English proficiency, the third research question. Both beginner and advanced classes indicated that they enjoy music on both questionnaires (see Table 1). Furthermore, the beginner students demonstrated agreement with the statement "I am good at karaoke" on the second questionnaire while the advanced students disagreed with the statement. Similarly, the beginner students rated

their musical ability higher on the second questionnaire (4.5) than the advanced students (3.5). However, four of the advanced students listed “listening to music” as a hobby, compared to two of the beginner students (see Appendix B). Six students in both groups indicated that they play musical instruments, and most of the students in both groups

enjoy karaoke. However, when asked if they enjoyed songs in English, Japanese, or both, most of the students in the two classes said “both” (see Table 4). However, 2 beginner students’ preferences changed from “both” or “English” to “Japanese” songs, while one more advanced student switched his preference from “English” to “both”.

**Table 1. Music questionnaire results (rating scale)**

Strongly disagree = 1  
 Disagree = 2  
 Somewhat disagree = 3  
 Somewhat agree = 4  
 Agree = 5  
 Strongly agree = 6

Questions	Beginner			Advanced			Whole Group		
	Pre-	Post-	Diff	Pre-	Post-	Diff	Pre-	Post-	Diff
1) Learning English is important.	5.2	5.2	0	5.8	5.8	0	5.5	5.5	0
2) Learning English is enjoyable.	4.5	5.0	+0.5	5.2	5.6	+0.4	4.9	5.3	+0.4
3) Learning English is difficult.	5.0	5.0	0	4.7	4.9	+0.2	4.9	5.0	+0.1
4) Learning English is boring.	2.2	2.0	-0.2	1.4	1.7	+0.3	1.8	1.9	+0.1
5) English listening activities are difficult.	4.8	4.3	-0.5	4.1	4.1	0	4.5	4.2	-0.3
6) I am good at music.	3.6	4.5	+0.9	3.6	3.5	-0.1	3.6	4.0	+0.4
7) It is easy to listen to English conversation.	2.5	2.6	+0.1	2.8	3.3	+0.5	2.7	3.0	+0.3
8) I enjoy music.	5.5	5.7	+0.2	5.4	5.7	+0.3	5.5	5.7	+0.2
9) I am good at karaoke.	3.3	4.0	+0.7	2.9	2.9	0	3.1	3.5	+0.4

**Table 2. Music questionnaire results - Short answer question 11**

Do you enjoy learning English?			
Beginner		Advanced	
1st questionnaire	2nd questionnaire	1st questionnaire	2nd questionnaire
- Yes (7)	- Yes (10)	- Yes (10)	- Yes (10)
- so-so (2)			
- a little (1)			

**Table 3. Music questionnaire results - Short answer question 3**

How do you feel about English listening activities?				
Beginner		Advanced		
1st questionnaire	2nd questionnaire	1st questionnaire	2nd questionnaire	
- Difficult (4)	- Difficult (6) - fun but difficult (2) - very interesting (2) - good for me (1)	- a little difficult (3)	- helpful (1)	
- effective (1)		- good (2)	- not easy, but fun (1)	
- so-so (1)		- fun (1)	- relaxed (1)	
- easy (1)		- happy if song lyrics (1)	- so-so (1)	
- it become study (1)		- important (1)	- fun (1)	
- don't know (1)		- good opportunity (1)	- difficult (1)	- fantastic, especially music (1)
		- interesting (1)	- some exciting/ others boring (1)	- good way to boost English competence (1)
			- very good (1)	

**Table 4. Music questionnaire results - Short answer question 9**

Do you enjoy songs in English, or Japanese, or both?			
Beginner		Advanced	
1st questionnaire	2nd questionnaire	1st questionnaire	2nd questionnaire
- Both (9)	- Both (8)	- Both (8)	- Both (9)
- English (1)	- Japanese (2)	- English (2)	- English (1)

**Discussion**

Over the course of this small-scale study, there did appear to be a slight increase in positive attitudes towards learning English in both the beginner and the advanced classes. Especially significant is the fact that the number of students who claimed they enjoyed learning English increased from 7 to 10 during the treatment period. This is consistent with Krashen's (2003) Affective Filter Hypothesis and indicates that music can lower the affective filter and increase the flow of positive emotions during the learning process. It further underscores the associative power of music. A positive association was created by incorporating music into English classes, thereby increasing positive feelings towards English itself. In this way, music activities offered the chance to incorporate the affective domain into instruction, which is important because while the cognitive domain centers on *how* learning occurs, the affective domain provides insight into *why* learning occurs (Keller, 1979).

Learner anxiety towards listening comprehension activities did not decrease significantly, however. In the case of the beginner students, the rating scale seemed to indicate a small reduction in their anxiety towards English listening



activities, possibly due to increased positive associations with English as discussed above. However, this finding was contradicted by the short answer section in which more beginner students indicated that listening activities were difficult. Even the advanced students viewed English listening activities as difficult both before and after the study, although they also perceived listening activities as worthwhile, and valuable in the language learning process. In response to the question “How do you feel about English listening activities?,” advanced students’ comments included “helpful;” “a good way to boost English competence”; and “very good” on the second questionnaire. So, like broccoli, even if unpleasant, listening activities are construed by some as important for their “linguistic health.” White (1987) refers to this aspect of Japanese culture which espouses the belief that “if anything comes easily...it does not confer virtue” and “the ability to commit intense effort to a task and ...devotion to hard work is the mark of virtue” (p.13). It would appear that the belief in “no pain, no gain” is pervasive in this context.

A possible reason for continued learner anxiety toward English listening activities may have been the difficulty level of the musical activities selected. During the treatment period, it was discovered that activities requiring students to listen for the “essence” rather than for exact words and/or phrases were considerably less daunting, particularly for the beginner students. Sequencing lyric strips, and musical bingo, were more suitable and offered the possibility of success for all students. However, gap fills ran the risk of increasing frustration levels unless they were used with easily comprehensible lyrics, such as “Hey Jude” or

“Yesterday” by The Beatles. When it comes to reducing learner anxiety, the biggest risk is losing the “affective advantage” by selecting activities that are too difficult. That said, these insights can only be gained through trial and error, as well as a working knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of any particular class.

In relation to research question three, more study is needed to determine the exact correlation between linguistic and musical ability. The beginner students actually rated themselves higher in terms of musical ability and karaoke on the second questionnaire. The majority of both groups indicated that they enjoy karaoke even though most of them rated their singing ability as poor. This could also be due in part to the tendency of the Japanese toward humility (Yoneoka, 2000). While there was no obvious pattern in linguistic and musical abilities, a more specific study is clearly needed.

### Future directions

The role of different kinds of musical activities in decreasing learner anxiety toward listening tasks needs to be explored further. An interesting study would involve two experimental groups and a control group in which one of the experimental groups would focus primarily on “essence listening” while the other would focus on listening for exact words and phrases. The impact of each on learner anxiety could be compared to each other and to the control group. Separate studies could investigate the link between English competence and karaoke ability; ability to play a musical instrument; and interest in music in general. A study that investigated possible links between auditory acuity in

listening tasks, and pitch discrimination in musical tasks could prove quite enlightening. The ability of music to inspire poorly motivated students taking compulsory English classes is also worthy of investigation. A limitation of the current study is that many of the students (particularly those in the advanced class) presumably have a heightened interest in English in general. This potentially dulls the impact of music as a motivator.

### Conclusions

The power of music to evoke emotion and inspire feeling is key to understanding its ability to instill positive associations with the learning of English. This was evident in the small-scale study, as was the pervasive impact music has on the lives of Japanese university students. All students reported that they enjoy music in some form, and all of them had favorite genres, and artists they could cite. This is one reason it is essential to continue to seek ways to best utilize music in the EFL classroom, as it capitalizes on something so important in students' lives. Music has great potential to enable language teachers to take advantage of the well-documented links between music and language, as well as to make the teaching of English more student-centered. Furthermore, if the right activities are selected for use as listening comprehension tasks, it is quite probable that music could play a key role in reducing learner anxiety. The best tasks are those which put success within students' reach and enable them to build confidence in their listening ability. Clearly, there is a need for further empirical study into strategies for getting the maximum benefit from music as a pedagogical tool in the EFL classroom.

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*This article is a revised version of an article that first appeared in The Journal of the College of Foreign Languages, 20, p.69-90, Himeji Dokkyo University, Japan.*

## Appendix A

### Music & listening questionnaire

The purpose of this questionnaire is to research your interest in music, and your feelings about listening to English conversation. Participation in this research is voluntary, but if you choose to participate, please sign below. I would like you to take this questionnaire twice - in September, 2005, and again in January, 2006. Your answers will be kept strictly anonymous and will have no effect on your final course grade. Please answer the questions as honestly as you can. Your true opinions are very important to me.

Thank you!  
Maggie Lieb

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Student Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### Short answer section:

- 1) What is your reason for learning English?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 2) What are your hobbies?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 3) How do you feel about English listening activities?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 4) Do you play a musical instrument? (if “yes”, what instrument do you play?)  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 5) Do you enjoy karaoke?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 6) How would you rank your singing ability? (good/very good/poor, etc.)  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 7) What kind of music do you enjoy listening to?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 8) Who are some of your favorite singers or bands?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 9) Do you enjoy songs in Japanese, in English, or both?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 10) What do you most want to learn about in this class?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 11) Do you enjoy learning English?  
\_\_\_\_\_

*Read each statement and choose your answer using the following key.*

**Strongly disagree = 1**

**Disagree = 2**

**Somewhat disagree = 3**

**Somewhat agree = 4**

**Agree = 5**

**Strongly agree = 6**

1) Learning English is important.

1    2    3    4    5    6

2) Learning English is enjoyable.

1    2    3    4    5    6

3) Learning English is difficult.

1    2    3    4    5    6

4) Learning English is boring.

1    2    3    4    5    6

5) English listening activities are difficult.

1    2    3    4    5    6

6) I am good at music.

1    2    3    4    5    6

7) It is easy to listen to English conversation.

1    2    3    4    5    6

8) I enjoy music.

1    2    3    4    5    6

9) I am good at karaoke.

1    2    3    4    5    6

## Appendix B

### Music & listening questionnaire short answers

#### Short answer section:

*Note: Answers are paraphrased and grouped according to topic. In some cases, students gave more than one reason, therefore the number of responses is sometimes greater than the number of students.*

1) What is your reason for learning English?

#### Beginner:

- To improve English conversation (4)
- I'm interested in English (2)
- For getting wide knowledge (1)
- I like USA (1)
- Necessary for future (1)
- For my job (1)
- Improve English reading

#### Advanced:

- For my job (4)
- Communicate with foreigners (4)
- I'm interested in English (1)
- To understand English songs (1)
- To read English books (1)
- For travel (1)

2) What are your hobbies?

**Beginner:**

- sports/exercise (6)
- Listening to music (2)
- Reading (2)
- dance (2)
- travel (1)
- singing (1)
- Piano (1)
- shopping (1)

**Advanced:**

- Listening to music (4)
- sports (4)
- movies (2)
- shopping (1)
- piano (1)
- reading (1)
- TV (1)
- singing (1)
- guitar (1)
- travel (1)
- going out with friends (1)

3) How do you feel about English listening activities? (see Table 1)

4) Do you play a musical instrument? (if “yes”, what instrument do you play?)

**Beginner:** (6 out of 10)

- guitar (4)
- piano (2)

**Advanced:** (6 out of 10)

- guitar (4)
- piano (2)
- sax (1)
- clarinet (1)
- drums (1)

5) Do you enjoy karaoke?

**Beginner:**

- Yes (6)
- so-so (2)
- No (2)

**Advanced**

- Yes (9)
- No (1)

**Total:** 15 out of 20 students said they enjoy karaoke.

6) How would you rank your singing ability? (good/very good/poor, etc.)

**Beginner:**

- Poor (6)
- Very good (3)
- good (1)

**Advanced:**

- Poor (5)
- Good (4)
- Very good (1)

**Total:** 11 students out of 20 ranked themselves as poor.

7) What kind of music do you enjoy listening to?

**Beginner:**

- rock (3)
- hip hop (2)
- R & B (1)
- Trance (1)
- House (1)
- Techno (1)
- good lyrics (1)
- classical (1)

- Jazz (1)
- pop (1)
- English music (1)

**Advanced:**

- pop (6)
- hip hop (4)
- all genres (2)
- rock (2)
- punk (2)
- jazz (1)
- blues (1)
- relaxing (1)
- foreign music (1)

8) Who are some of your favorite singers or bands?

*Note: Unless otherwise indicated, each artist was mentioned only once.*

**Beginner:**

Jesse Frederick, Sum 41, U2, The Killer, Green Day, Glay, Utada, Orange Renge, Marilyn Manson, Slipknot, Billy Joel, Sarah Brightman, Mr. Children, The Beetles, Smap, Red Hot Chili Peppers

**Advanced:**

Black Eyed Peas (2), Avril Lavigne (2), Green Day (2), Acidman, Royksop, Lincoln Park, Namie Amuro, The High

Laws, Good Charlotte, Def Tech, Backstreet Boys, Bon Jovi, Simple Plan, Rancid, Masayoshi Yamazaki

9) Do you enjoy songs in Japanese, in English, or both? (see Table 1)

10) What do you most want to learn about in this class?

**Beginner:**

- English conversation (4)
- Communications (1)
- Expressions (1)
- Music in the world (1)
- Listening (1)
- Life in USA (1)

**Advanced:**

- speaking (5)
- Useful expressions (3)
- collocation sets (1)
- Vocabulary (1)
- Listening (1)
- Nothing, I'll just do my best (1)

## Appendix C

### *Songs and activities used*

- 1) **Activity:** Musical Bingo  
**Song:** New York, New York by Frank Sinatra
- 2) **Activity:** Rhyming Words Gap Fill  
**Song:** Every Breath You Take by The Police
- 3) **Activity:** Days of the Week Gap Fill & Matching  
**Song:** Friday I'm in Love by The Cure
- 4) **Activity:** True/False Activity  
**Song:** Cats in the Cradle by Harry Chapin
- 5) **Activity:** Times Gap Fill  
**Song:** The Day Before You Came by Abba
- 6) **Activity:** Sequencing Lyric Strips  
**Song:** Another Day in Paradise by Phil Collins
- 7) **Activity:** Identifying Long Vowels  
**Song:** Yesterday by the Beatles
- 8) **Activity:** Musical Bingo  
**Song:** Hey Jude by the Beatles



- 9) **Activity:** Sequencing Lyric Strips  
**Song:** Let It Be by the Beatles
- 10) **Activity:** School Subjects Gap Fill  
**Song:** What a Wonderful World by Sam Cooke